

STAR MAR 31, 1972

Hill Assailed Over Water Supply

The District's director of environmental services today denounced alleged congressional indifference to an impending water supply shortage in the metropolitan area.

Alexander scheduled a press conference this morning aboard a floating houseboat that analyzes water samples in the Potomac, to follow yesterday's release of three statements from his office with recommendations on how to avoid the crisis.

"SOMETIMES IN THE MIDDLE to late 70's," he said in an interview today, "we will probably have to ration water in this area."

The press conference, which was to take reporters up and down the river so they could analyze water samples themselves, was to be aboard the houseboat that Alexander has dubbed the "SS Inouye" for Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, D-Hawaii.

Inouye, chairman of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee which must approve all District government expenditures, repeatedly has criticized the boat, which cost the city about \$21,000.

ALEXANDER SAID he hopes the public will put pressure on the Senate Public Works Committee to approve two dams which the House Public Works Committee left out of its omnibus public works bill earlier this month.

In the three reports released yesterday, the water management staff proposed:

- An immediate city study into the possibility of using treated sludge for drinking.
- Equipping all new buildings in the Washington area, both residential and commercial, with dual water systems and water saving devices.
- Construction of water storage reservoirs on the Potomac River's upper reaches and a low-level dam at Key Bridge to hold treated waste as an emergency supply.

ONE OF THE THREE reports said that in the past, area officials "have relaxed in the faith" that the federal government would take the "necessary action to build reservoirs to

supplement" water use from the Potomac River.

"Under the circumstances this faith does not seem to be warranted and it is necessary to explore some alternate ways that the metropolitan area might be able to meet the growing need," the paper said.

The proposal of "direct recycling of affluent" into water distribution systems requires "considerable additional investigation," the paper noted, but said it is essential that the investigation begin now.

ALEXANDER SAID it is important for the Senate Public Works Committee to authorize construction of new dams and reservoirs in spite of strong opposition from conservationists.

The area now consumes an average of 402 million gallons daily and is expected to use 995 million gallons a day starting in 1976. However, the reports noted that during a low flow of the Potomac last year only 288 million gallons daily were available.